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A
L E T T E R
TO THE
A U T H O R
O F A
P A M P H L E T,
INTITLED,
Pietas Oxoniensis.



L E T T E R

TO THE

A U T H O R



P A M E N T

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Pietas Oxoniensis

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H. B. Hall*

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L E T T E R

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O F A

P A M P H L E T,

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Pietas Oxoniensis.


“ Where two extremes are proposed, either in matters
“ of Speculation or Practice, and neither of them
“ has *certain and convincing Evidence*, it is generally
“ safest to take the *middle Way*. *Moderation* is more
“ likely to come near the Truth, than *doubtful Ex-*
“ *trêmes.*” Dr WATTS.

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A

LETTER, &c.

SIR,



It is not my Design in the following Pages, to enter upon any literary Dispute respecting either Doctrines or Principles; nor would I be understood to impeach the goodness of your Intention, or detract from the merit of a late Performance, intitled, PIETAS OXONIENSIS; wherein you undertake, with great justice, to prove what almost all considerate People are now very ready to give their Assent to, namely, that the Proceedings of a learned Body were attended with an unbecoming (not to say illegal) severity and rigour. But as we can only judge of the tendency of Things by their Effects, I am inclined to believe your performance had

been attended with much better Consequences had you rested the matter there; but we find in the process of your Work, an attempt to maintain certain particular Doctrines, which the wisdom of former ages was not able to settle, and which hitherto have never been clearly explained by any Man; and I make no doubt, but that whoever remains dissatisfied till they are set in a clear unclouded View, may wait with HORACE's Clown,

——“ *dum defluat Annis*

——“ *In omne volubilis ævum.*”

It might have been a sufficient Vindication of the young Men who were objected to, on account of certain tenets (among other things) that the same tenets have been continually held by many great and good Men since the Reformation, at least, who for the exemplariness of their piety, as well as their firm attachment to the established Church of *England*, may be justly stiled the more excellent of the earth, Fathers of the Church, “ Men of renown, who were for a name “ and a praise in their day and generation.”

Not

Not that this is any conclusive argument in defence of their particular principles; since we may admire and esteem the Men, without fully embracing all their sentiments; nor will any truly good man make an exact conformity to their opinions in disputable points the ONLY Criterion of goodness in another.

A very little real knowledge of human nature, and its deceitfulness, will soon convince us with what difficulty we get rid of that darling passion, *Self-love*: nor has it been said without great propriety, that a man who so conquers this enemy as wholly to subdue it in himself, does more than even ALEXANDER, though he had conquered the world. PROTEUS-like, its disguises and specious artifices are so many and various, that nothing less than an understanding spiritually enlightened can discern its secret operations.

HENCE it is no marvel, that the best of men are influenced in some measure by so sly and insinuating a Guest, and at one time or other are led to imagine, they are urging the dictates of Truth and sound Judgment, when in fact they are nothing but the fond persuasions

persuasions of Opinion, strengthened by Habit, and confirmed by Inclination: nor is it to be deemed a matter of surprise, if we often lose our way by following a false light, which when more closely pursued, is found to be but a delusive vapour of the earth.

BUT, however, not to fatigue you with a tedious Introduction, I come now to assign the Reasons for my present writing. In page 35, &c. of your pamphlet, I find it positively asserted that “ the Articles and Services of “ the Church of *England* are full of strong “ Calvinism, such as *absolute Election, Reprobation, and final Perseverance* :” But before I proceed to any Remarks upon this assertion, give me leave to observe, that almost all your arguments produced in order to support these particular points of doctrines, (you say) are founded upon the authority of our Church; therefore I shall make it my business to confine myself to the same authority, without any intended deviation at all. To return then to your assertion, viz. “ That “ the Church holds the doctrine of *absolute Election, Reprobation, and final Perseverance* ;” This induced me to take up my Prayer-book; and

and having carefully read it over, you must excuse me, SIR, if I say, I cannot find, from the beginning to the end, any thing that does at all favour such doctrines, but rather the reverse, excepting the Seventeenth Article; and that is held forth in so mild a manner, as to justify only a particular Election, (what this Election is may appear hereafter.)——

Now, SIR, if I may be allowed the liberty you have taken in many particulars, of putting my own meaning on the Seventeenth Article, and laying down the plain literal sense of the following passages, (though many more of the same import might be produced) there is nothing in the whole Church-Service, (Articles, Prayers, &c.) as it now stands, or as it has been since the reign of Queen ELIZABETH, which can at all justify such doctrines.

IN Article the Second, our Saviour is said to be “*a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men ;*” and to see that this ought not to be understood in a confined or limited sense, we need only compare it with the Thirty-first Article, which says, “*that the offering of CHRIST once made, is*
“ *that*

*" that perfect Redemption, Propitiation, and
 " Satisfaction for ALL the sins of the
 " WHOLE world, both original and actual:"*
 also the Communion-Service, speaking of the
 same thing, says, " that by his one oblation
 " of himself, once offered, he made a full, per-
 " fect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and sa-
 " tisfaction for the sins of the WHOLE world:"

Moreover, in our Church Catechism, the
 second answer to the Question, " what dost
 " thou chiefly learn by these articles of thy
 " belief?" is, " I believe in GOD the Son,
 " who hath redeemed me and ALL man-
 " kind." What still strengthens, and in
 some measure confirms me in the opinion
 that the above should be taken in the most
 simple and literal sense, is, that when the
 Minister in the Communion-Service offers
 the Bread and Wine, he declares, " that
 " CHRIST died, and that his Blood was
 " given for every respective communicant;"
 though at the same time he may see from a
 personal knowledge (if he has been but a
 small time in the Parish) that many who
 come to the table, have no marks at all of
 being *born again*, or of being the *children of*
 GOD: and yet, how could any conscientious
 Minister

Minister make such a solemn declaration, unless he believed the Sacrifice and Death of CHRIST extended to the *WHOLE, world*, or to *ALL mankind*, which should rather, in conformity to the rigid doctrine of CALVIN, run thus, "The body of our Lord JESUS CHRIST (*IF it was given and decreed for thee*) preserve thy body and soul, &c. "Take, and eat this, in remembrance that CHRIST *died for thee, (IF elected,) then* thou mayest feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving."

HAD the compilers of our Church-Articles, Service, &c. intended the interpretation of the above should have been so foreign to the plain sense as you would have it, they ought to have been more consistent, and not to have laid a faithful Minister under the difficulty either of declaring what in his Conscience he believed to be a falsity, or of being compelled to the necessity of quitting the Church. Besides, a few words added to, or altered in those passages I have quoted, might easily have brought the sense to your interpretation; such as, "CHRIST was a propitiation and satisfaction for the sins of
B "all

" all HIS *people*—HIS *elect*—or HIS *chosen* :"
 Had this been the case, our Church would
 have supported you in your opinion (" that
 " what is said of CHRIST dying for ALL men,
 " having redeemed ALL mankind, and being
 " a propitiation for the sins of the WORLD ;
 " means, that his sacrifice and undertaking
 " are *infinite* and *all-sufficient*, he being the
 " very and eternal God : " *) And I should
 have supposed that your proof upon proof,
 which, you say, might have been produced
 in favour of what you have asserted, must,
 when known, have been worth attending to :
 But that there is any propriety in your af-
 firming, that the words ALL MANKIND, the
 WHOLE WORLD, &c. only mean a very small
 part of the *whole world*, and of *all mankind*,
 is what I am not able to discern ; and am
 rather inclined to believe, you have made
 them speak a language never intended by
 the original Authors ; if so, you have no
 reason to be displeased with any one who
 shall view them in a different light.

In regard to the Seventeenth Article, what
 is there mentioned of Predestination and
 Election, must be understood of God's e-
 special

* See PIETAS OXONIENSIS, page 55.

special love to *some* of his eminent Saints, and not as the one only way of his dealing with *all* those who shall eventually be heirs of salvation; otherwise the latter clause of the Article would have been quite needless, which says, “God’s promises must be received *“ in such wise as they be generally set forth to us “ in holy Scripture :”* Then the question will be, how are those promises held forth in holy Writ?—why, to “every creature—whose—
“ever will—to the ends of the earth;” for God declares “he is no respecter of persons;” and, as it is expressed in the Morning-Service of our Church, “he *desireth* not the death
“of a sinner, but *rather* that he may turn
“from his wickedness and live.”

BUT further, that this Article of Predestination and Election must be understood in a limited sense (as to some great Instruments or eminent Saints of God) is evident; otherwise it would contradict all the several passages I have mentioned before, and also what is positively declared in the Sixteenth Article, and in our Church Catechism. But here I shall only mention the Article which says, “that after we have received the HOLY

“ GHOST, we *may depart* from grace given.”
 This Article, I know, has given great offence to many zealous Calvinists; an instance of which I will now produce — You mention, “ that at the famous Protestant Synod of
 “ *Dort*, the doctrines of *universal Redemption*,
 “ *and falling from Grace*, were condemned by
 “ *all the reformed Churches:*” but it is not probable the Bishops, &c. sent by King JAMES the First concurred in the said resolution; not only because the said Sixteenth Article contradicts it, by saying, “ we may after we
 “ have received the HOLY GHOST depart
 “ from grace given;” but at a Conference at *Hampton-Court* before the said King, Doctor REYNOLDS and some Divines (who were all *strong Calvinists*) adhering to him, wanted the said Article to be explained by some words added thereto; — such as, “ we may
 “ depart from grace given;” yet *neither totally*, nor *finally* *: but this motion was overruled. Therefore it is very plain, if those Gentlemen did concur in the said resolution, their opinions were never adopted as Articles of Faith; and that our Church doth hold we may fall from

* See Doctor BARLOW's Account of the Conference at *Hampton-Court*.

from grace; or what need was there for Doctor REYNOLDS and others wanting the said Article to be altered?

A second proof that our Church allows it possible for its members to fall from grace, is, that otherwise all who have been baptised must be saved; for in the Office of Baptism it is said, the child or person is “*regenerate*” and *grafted* into CHRIST’s Church, for “which all present are called upon to give thanks;” here it is plain some benefit is supposed to be received, or it would be absurd to give thanks; what this benefit is, I will not take upon me precisely to determine; but Regeneration, in its lowest sense, must mean either the having the Grace of God, or being put into a salvable state: therefore, if it be true, that our Church declares CHRIST died for ALL *mankind*, the WHOLE *world*, &c. and that we may *fall from grace*, which it most certainly does, if any precise meaning can be fixed to words, then, to avoid the greatest absurdity and contradiction, the Predestination and Election mentioned in the Seventeenth Article must be understood of some great Instruments or eminent Saints.

You

You seem to lay great stress on the Lambeth Articles, because they were sent to and received by the University of *Cambridge*, to settle some differences there; and these you would produce as proofs of our Church holding Calvinistical doctrines; but they will not serve your purpose so fully, perhaps, if we consider that some years after (in the same reign) before King JAMES the First, at the Conference at *Hampton-Court*, the aforesaid Doctor REYNOLDS, and others with him, wanted the said nine Articles to be added to the book of XXXIX Articles.—In answer to which, the Bishop of *London* (though a moderate Calvinist) took occasion to observe to his Majesty, “ how very many in these
 “ days neglect holiness of life, presuming too
 “ much upon persisting in Grace, laying all
 “ their religion upon Predestination; if I
 “ shall be saved, I shall be saved; which he
 “ termed a desperate doctrine, shewing it to
 “ be contrary to good divinity, and the true
 “ doctrine of Predestination;” so that although these nine Articles were received at the University of *Cambridge*, yet you see soon after (in the same King’s reign) they were rejected, and that at a more considerable
 Conference :

Conference: therefore your quoting them proves nothing; especially as they never were by our Church admitted as Articles of Faith.

ANOTHER thing upon which you seem to lay full as much stress, is the bad conduct and principles of BARRET, because many of them were contrary to some of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, but more especially to those of Calvinism: now, though I must confess I know very little of his conduct in general, or of this affair in particular, yet I cannot see with what propriety the erroneous part of his principles should be charged on those who hold other parts thereof that may be true, though contrary to Calvinism; and permit me to observe, that it was said of the Calvinists in those days, "that they persecuted all people who differed from them in sentiments, as much in spirit and temper as ever the Roman Catholicks did the Protestants:" and might not his Recantation be a forced one? Besides, what would the Calvinists think of the opposite party, if they were to be accused by them of being all Mahometans, because in common with the Turks, they are such strenuous as-
feters

serters of the doctrine of absolute Election and Reprobation?

AGAIN, touching the Catechism you transcribe from some old editions of the Bishops Bible, together with the Confession of Faith bound up with the old common prayer-book; we have your own declaration for it, that they have ceased to be printed of a long time: if this be true, any subscription that I may have made to these books, as a member of the Church of *England*, can by no means necessitate me to hold the opinions *once* contained in them, nor can any impartial person pronounce me an erroneous Churchman for a disbelief of them.—And, indeed, I know not whether it may not be looked upon as a distinguishing mark of the wisdom of our Church, which has thought proper to omit publishing the aforesaid Catechism and Confession.—This however is certain, that your inference is by no means just, if I understand it aright, which seems to intimate that a Clergyman who should not preach the doctrines held forth in that Catechism and in the nine Lambeth Articles, &c. would render himself

himself obnoxious to the shameful charge of perjury.—For to state the argument.

CERTAIN doctrines have been maintained by certain members of the Church of *England*,—but the constitution of the established Church does not directly consist in a belief of those doctrines,—Therefore whoever does not make them an Article of his Faith, is not a true member of the Church of *England*.

VERY little sagacity is required to see the fallacy of this way of reasoning; besides if it be true that whatever has been received as matter of Faith by our Church in former ages, is in full force now; your argument will prove as much for Transubstantiation as Reprobation; the former of which was indeed allowed by our Church before its Reformation: but, notwithstanding all that can be said, this, I think, is sufficiently evident, that the grand Test by which every member of the established Church ought to be tried, is this, What is its present constitution? whether it be now what it was when I was admitted into it? if it be, and I conscientiously think it good and right, it is of

no concern to me what it was before.——
 From all which I would only draw this conclusion, that a Minister cannot be looked upon as perjured, for not holding what was *once* in the Church, before he belonged to it.

AND now after all that has been said, it remains still to be proved, that our Church does indeed hold forth these doctrines in the very light in which you represent them; for it appears from the Account of a dignified Writer, that “ the doctrine of absolute
 “ Predestination * never gained any considerable credit in any Church in the world
 “ for the first fifteen hundred years; it was
 “ broached by one LUCIDUS, a Presbyter in
 “ *France*, about the year of our Lord five
 “ hundred, of which the *Pelagian* Heresy
 “ was the occasion; but quickly condemned
 “ by two Councils, one at *Arles*, the other
 “ at *Lyons*. About three hundred years
 “ after, it was revived by GODSCALCUS, a
 “ person of ill fame, but condemned again
 “ by a Council at *Mentz*; whereas the contrary doctrine was never doubted of by
 “ the
 * FOWLER Bishop of *Gloucester*, vide his *Christian Liberty*.

“ the Fathers of the first three hundred
 “ years, and is as expressly asserted in the
 “ most ancient Confessions of the reformed
 “ Churches beyond sea, and also in the Ar-
 “ ticles, Homilies, and Catechism of our
 “ Church.” And those holy Martyrs which
 you produce as Champions of your own
 cause, have as plainly given their testimony
 to a contrary opinion as I can desire.—for
 “ Archbishop CRANMER, in the Preface to
 “ his Book against GARDINER, hath these
 “ words,—that CHRIST made a sacrifice and
 “ oblation of his Body upon the Cross, which
 “ was a *full* redemption, satisfaction, and
 “ propitiation for the sins of the *whole*
 “ *world.*”

ALSO, “ Bishop LATIMER, in his Sermon
 “ on the first Sunday after the Epiphany,
 “ tells us, that Jesus is an *Hebrew* word, which
 “ signifieth in our *English* Tongue, a Saviour
 “ and Redeemer of *all mankind born into the*
 “ *world:* and again in another Sermon, that
 “ CHRIST shed as much blood for *Judas*, as
 “ he did for *Peter*; *Peter* believed it, and
 “ therefore was saved; *Judas* would not
 “ believe it, and therefore was condemned;

“ the fault being in him only, and in no-
 “ body else.”

A third testimony, is that of Bishop
 HOOPER, who saith, “ that *Cain* was no
 “ more excluded from the Promise of CHRIST
 “ till he excluded himself, than *Abel* ; *Saul*,
 “ than *David* ; *Judas*, than *Peter* ; *Esau*,
 “ than *Jacob* :” and again, “ it is not a
 “ Christian Man’s part to attribute his Sal-
 “ vation to his own free will, with the *Pe-*
 “ *lagian*, and extenuate original sin ; nor to
 “ make God the author of ill and damna-
 “ tion, with the *Manichee* ; nor yet to say,
 “ that God hath written fatal laws, and
 “ with necessity of destiny, violently pulleth
 “ the one by the hair into heaven, and
 “ thrusteth the other headlong into hell.”

I should not have been so ready in bring-
 ing these Evidences against your affirmations,
 was I not well assured that the memory of
 our Church-reformers is had in such high
 esteem and veneration among the generality
 of serious people, that the very mention of
 their names has greater influence upon their
 minds than the most powerful arguments ;
 and

and an *ipse dixit* from any of them, may be a sufficient authority for implicit credit to those, who have neither time nor inclination to examine into the truth of things.

You will remember, SIR, that I do not take upon me to justify the generality of the Clergy, more especially those who were the first movers in expelling the young Gentlemen from the U——y; since I am persuaded the greater part of them do neither preach nor hold the fundamental Truths of the Christian Religion, as set forth by our Church; nevertheless, I cannot help thinking that the Author of PIETAS OXONIENSIS should have been a little more cautious, and not so severely have censured and condemned a great part of the pious, converted members of the Church of *England*, who highly approve of her doctrines, and love to attend the ministry of those who preach them, though they are humble and modest in the great points of *Election, final Perseverance, &c.* —I say, humble and modest, because, they well know that great Saints and holy men, whose aim was to live and die in the Faith of CHRIST, have differed about these doctrines,

trines, *vide* Bishop REYNOLDS, SANDERSON, HALL, Dr HAMMOND, and the writings of TILENUS; see *examination of TILENUS before the Triers of Utopia*, and his *Calvinists Cabinet unlocked*.

AND now, SIR, as I am drawing near to a conclusion, permit me to observe what particularly induced me to take up my pen, and write to you in this public manner; When your pamphlet first appeared, I embraced the earliest opportunity of perusing it, and without much consideration perceived your earnestness in supporting those particular doctrines above mentioned; now though I could not altogether agree thereto, yet as I thought it my duty to exercise modesty and candour, I should have endeavoured to pass by those sentiments with indifference, rather than cavil at them because they seemed to clash with my own; but since then, having been in company with some great favourers of these principles, whose opinions have not been at all weakned by your publication, and who now think proper to make the belief of these doctrines essential to salvation, a persuasion entered my mind, that it might not be

be amiss to examine whether these things were so or not: Seeing then that every man has a right of private judgment (and, as SOLOMON says, *If thou wilt be wise, be wise for thyself*) it appeared to me by no means exceptionable if I should take the liberty of speaking that judgment. I have been the more free in opening my mind upon this occasion, because I see so few good effects arising from the doctrine above objected to, since its too common tendency, as far as I have been able to judge, is to warm the imagination, render its Advocates dogmatical, contract the Sphere of their affection, and while it engages their whole thoughts, necessarily shuts up the entrance to a more becoming conduct, and more useful engagements.

NOR are these bad effects to be limited only to certain times and circumstances; for we find CALVIN himself, though in all other respects a pious and judicious man, yet from a certain bigotry of spirit, resulting I doubt not from his having carried these particular points to their excess, branding LUTHER with

with as severe, as they were unjust, appellations, and burning the heretic SERVERUS; also, it is too notorious, that many who have thought proper to call themselves after his name, have not only been exceeding eager in defending this *pillar and ground of the Truth*, as they think it; but, to the disgrace of that meekness and lowliness of heart, which should teach us to "esteem every one better than ourselves," have been too active in venting bitter reflections against those who cannot see with the same eyes as themselves; and at the same time that they have looked upon them as Papists, Jesuits, &c. have been so very harsh as to give *this* title to their principles, viz. *the doctrine of devils*.

Now it were easy for me to produce instances wherein people firmly attached to your opinions, have declared their sentiments in such a manner, that the bare repeating of them would be exceedingly shocking to every one who is not a steady Partizan in the same cause; but should I do this, it might perhaps with justice be deemed a spirit of opposition in me, and bear too much resemblance

blance to the *law of retaliation*. And though it is not altogether fair to argue from the abuse against the truth of any doctrine, yet it may serve to teach us “ in all things whatsoever we do, to consider the end thereof that we may not do amiss.”

You know, SIR, with what design I set out; I hope I have not erred from it: and now whether your conclusion, “ that every
 “ person professing himself of the Church of
 “ *England*, who does not hold these parti-
 “ cular points of doctrine under considera-
 “ tion, is an erroneous member thereof;” I leave every unbiassed and candid person to judge for himself: and may that God in whom we live and move and have our being, whose we are, and from whom every good and perfect gift cometh, may He, who knows our ignorance and liableness to error, lead us into all truth, keep us stedfast in the faith, root us in that Charity without which we are *nothing*, and give us more of “ the
 “ Wisdom which is from above, and which
 “ is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be in-
 treated,

[26]

"treated, full of Mercy, and good Fruits,
"without *partiality*, and without hypo-
"crisy."

I am, SIR,

With all respect,

your most obedient,

4 AP 54

humble servant,

A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND.

Aug. 4. 1768.

